



Paragraph Writing

for Thai Students

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PREFACE

Writing is one of the most important forms of communication in our everyday life. Particularly, writing English is now an important part of university study since it is mainly the place where you can practice writing and prepare yourselves for today world in which English is used as an international language. Learning to write well in English takes practice and patience because you have to be able to write accurate sentences and learn to link words, phrases, and sentences to create your longer texts effectively. In other words, writing effective paragraphs is crucial. When you are able to write good paragraphs, you will be able to perform well in your higher levels of writing, such as essay, report, and research effectively. Thus, becoming fluent writers in English for both sentence and paragraph can help you prepare yourselves for higher education and/or future career.

This textbook is written and used for the paragraph writing course (205122). It is designed for English learners who are between lower and upper intermediate levels. It aims to improve their writing strategies and skills in English from various paragraph types. By the end of the course, students should be able to write different types of paragraphs for a meaningful communication and write sentences containing main clauses as well as subordinate clauses with proper discourse connectors.

The text consists of 8 chapters. Chapter 1 defines what a paragraph is, its main parts, and basic grammar for writing. In Chapter 2, students will learn about pre-writing activities which will help them understand what they are going to do before writing their paragraph. Chapter 3 discusses characteristics of good paragraphs which are unity, coherence, and cohesion. Chapters 4 through 8 focus on writing different types of paragraphs, namely descriptive, narrative, process, reason and result, and compare and contrast paragraphs.

Each chapter in this textbook begins with a discussion about the main content, followed by model paragraphs, writing processes and strategies, and

exercises. From Chapter 4 to Chapter 8, writing practices are included. Students will be asked to write particular topics of each particular paragraph type. The activities in each chapter help students with a particular aspect of paragraph writing, for example, brainstorming, making a paragraph outline, writing good topic, supporting, and concluding sentences, using appropriate transitional words and phrases for each type of paragraphs, varying sentence structures, and correcting common mistakes found when writing sentences.

Appendixes in the back of this textbook provide additional useful materials for paragraph writing. Appendix 1 provides peer feedback form, Appendix 2 shows a rubric for paragraph writing assessment used in this course, and Appendix 3 contains information about comparative adjectives which helps students to improve their writing compare and contrast paragraphs. Additionally, answers to exercises in this textbook are provided.

An important feature of this textbook is the inclusion of a number of sample paragraphs distributed throughout the chapters. In addition, it provides relevant practices, grammar points, and language use necessary and useful for writing learners. For many English learners who are not able to write effectively in English, this textbook deals with different elements that can have positive effects on the quality of a written product. Also, these learners will benefit from step-by-step activities in this textbook.

This textbook is ensured to meet the needs of lower and upper intermediate learners through basic vocabulary development. Explanations and step-by-step activities are clear and appropriate for paragraph writing practice. Comprehensible model paragraphs and four-color design will help learners' visual literacy.

I wish to thank the Department of English, Faculty of Humanities, Naresuan University for supporting me to write this textbook. I also wish to express my appreciation to Associate professor Dr. Watana Padgate and Mr. Richard Glover for their support and encouragement.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION TO PARAGRAPH WRITING



Learning how to write a paragraph in English is not easy, but there are ways to learn and practice. First of all, it is important to understand what a paragraph is.

WHAT IS A PARAGRAPH?

A **paragraph** is a group of related sentences that discuss one (and usually only one) main idea. A paragraph can be as short as one sentence or as long as ten sentences. The number of sentences is unimportant; however, the paragraph should be long enough to develop the main idea clearly.

(Oshima & Hogue, p. 2)

A paragraph is a group of about 10-12 sentences about one *topic*. Every sentence in a strong paragraph is about the same topic. All of the sentences explain the writer's *main idea* (most important idea) about that topic. ... A paragraph can give information, tell an opinion, explain something, or even tell a short story. The sentences are arranged logically, so the reader can easily understand what the writer wants to say.

In academic writing, a paragraph has a *topic sentence* that directly tells the reader the main idea. The other sentences in the paragraph, called *supporting sentences*, give more information about the topic. They add specific details and explanations. In academic English, the topic sentence is usually (but not always!) first or last.

(Zemach & Islam, p. 9)

Most paragraphs follow a certain format. They have three basic parts. A good paragraph usually begins with a sentence that states the main idea of the whole paragraph. This sentence is called the *topic sentence*. The next group of sentences in the paragraph explains the main idea. They add details and give support. These sentences are called *supporting sentences*. Some paragraphs end with a *concluding sentence*. This sentence restates the main idea.

(Blanchard & Root, p. 1)

CHAPTER 2

PRE-WRITING ACTIVITIES



Before writing a paragraph, you should be well-prepared. There are three steps that are recommended in this chapter: understanding the assignment, brainstorming, and making a paragraph outline.

UNDERSTANDING THE ASSIGNMENT

It is very important that you understand what you are going to write clearly. There are things that you need to keep in mind before you start writing your paragraph.

- Read the instructions of your assignment clearly.
- Understand what your teacher wants you to write in the assignment.
- Ask your teacher if you do not understand about anything.
- Find the correct topic for your paragraph.
- Recognize the number of words you are required to write in your paragraph.
- Recognize what type of your paragraph is, for example, descriptive paragraphs, narrative paragraphs, process paragraphs, or reason and result paragraphs.
- Think about the information or details you need to put in your text.
- Study the rubric for writing assessment of this paragraph writing course (see Appendix F for more details).

BRAINSTORMING

There are ways to generate your ideas for your writing. In this course, you are recommended to follow the steps below. These steps are adapted from Kalchayanant (2016) and Folse, Muchmore-vokoun, and Solomon (2004).

- Discuss the topic with your classmates or teacher.
- Search for some ideas from various sources, for example, the Internet, books, and magazines.
- Make a list of keywords you can think about that particular topic or come into your head, either related or unrelated keywords.
- Do not worry about grammar or spelling.
- Make a word map of your ideas about that particular topic.
- Edit your word map by grouping them according to their relevancy and deleting irrelevant groups or ideas.

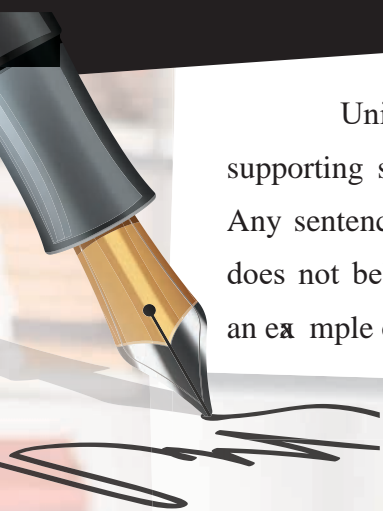
CHAPTER 3

CHARACTERISTICS OF GOOD PARAGRAPHS



In this paragraph writing course, three main characteristics are emphasized for good paragraphs. These characteristics are unity, coherence, and cohesion.

UNITY



Unity is a key characteristic of good paragraphs. It means that “all the supporting sentences must relate to the main idea stated in the topic sentence. Any sentence that does not support the main idea is an *irrelevant sentence* and does not belong in the paragraph” (Blanchard, & Root, 2017, p. 207). Look at an example of a paragraph below and notice its unity.

BENEFITS OF REGULAR EXERCISE

(1) There are three benefits of regular exercise. (2) First, it can help you to lose weight. (3) When you do exercising, energy in your body is used to burn calories, and this helps you to lose weight. (4) Second, it promotes your memory. (5) Research has shown that regular exercise can improve some part of the brain to grow in size and blood flow to the brain. (6) This is crucial for memory and learning. (7) It can also prevent your bad breath. (8) Lastly, it can help you sleep well. (9) It is because when you do a regular exercise, your body’s temperature increases. (10) When you sleep, your body’s temperature drops, and this results in the improvement of your sleep quality. (11) It is believed to decrease your hunger throughout the day. (12) In short, regular exercise can help you lose weight, improve your memory, and sleep well.

You can notice that the sentences 7 and 11 are not logically related to the topic sentence. These two irrelevant sentences do not belong in the paragraph because they do not relate to the benefits of regular exercise. They make this paragraph have less unity. Therefore, when you write a paragraph, you have to keep in mind that all supporting sentences need to relate to your main idea stated in the topic sentence.



CHAPTER 4

DESCRIPTIVE PARAGRAPHS



Writing a descriptive paragraph is creating a concrete picture and specific details of an object, a situation, a person, or a place. In this paragraph writing course, you are mainly required to describe people and places.

DESCRIBING PEOPLE

When you describe someone, you should start describing him/her from the top and then go through details about his/her physical appearance. For example, you can describe his/her height, weight, hairstyles, age, clothes, what he/she wears, or how he/she looks like. It is true that using adjectives is also very important for descriptive paragraphs (adapted from Blanchard & Root, 2017). The table below shows the adjectives that are commonly used for describing people's physical appearance.

Table 4 Adjectives used for describing people's physical appearance

PHYSICAL APPEARANCE	ADJECTIVES
Height	tall short average medium
Weight/size	big overweight small thin skinny slim slender
Hairstyle	long short curly messy straight bobbed thin thick textured wavy spiky shoulder-length new modern bald
Hair color	black white gray blonde red brown shiny glossy
Age	old elderly middle-aged young teenage
Clothes	formal checked casual stretch plain plaid striped polka-dot polo long-sleeved short-sleeved v-neck crew-neck leather
Look	happy sad angry strong fit muscular shy worried calm ordinary smart attractive beautiful handsome well-built ugly
Skin condition	smooth healthy wrinkly dry
Skin color	black dark light brown tan white
Face shape	big small round square oval rectangular heart-shaped diamond-shaped
Eyes	big small oval round bright
Eye color	black dark brown blue green

CHAPTER 5

NARRATIVE PARAGRAPHS



Writing a narrative paragraph is telling a story or presenting a series of events. It describes a story from the beginning to the end. Normally, a narrative paragraph tells a story that happened in the past. Therefore, the correct use of past tense forms is really important. Moreover, transitional words and phrases that indicate the order of events are used to explain the order of events more clearly and help to make the events flow smoothly. They can be put at the beginning of a sentence to guide the reader about time order, or they can be other time phrases indicating the order of events as shown in the following page (adapted from Boardman, 2008).

TRANSITIONAL WORDS AND PHRASES

INDICATING THE ORDER OF EVENTS

Signal words used at the beginning to a sentence

First	Firstly	At first	To begin with
Socond	Next	Then	After that
Later	Afterwards	Suddenly	At the same time
Finally	Last	At last	In the end

NOTE: When you begin a sentence with these signal words and phrases, you have to put a comma at the end of the signal words.

Other time phrases

in the morning	in the afternoon	in the evening
at noon	at night	at 10 a.m.
on Monday	in August	the next day
three days later	five years ago	the following two days

Below are some ex mples of narrative paragraphs telling stories that happened in the past. Notice how the past tense forms and the transitional words and phrases are used in these narrative paragraphs.

(Notice the past tense forms in the paragraph below)



Figure 16 Getting promoted

CHAPTER 6

PROCESS PARAGRAPHS



Writing a process paragraph is explaining how to make or do something step by step. A process paragraph is also called a "how to paragraph". It describes a process or steps according to time order. The signal words, such as *First*, *Then*, *Next*, *After that*, and *Finally* are normally used in process paragraphs (see more transitional words and phrases used in time order in Chapter 3). These signal words can help the reader follow the steps of making or doing something easily.

WRITING IMPERATIVE SENTENCES

When writing a process paragraph, you may use the **imperative**. That is, you use the infinitive of the verb without ‘to’ (adapted from Boardman, 2008).

EXAMPLE

Cut it into pieces.

Put it in hot water.

Keep it in a refrigerator.

When you make a negative imperative, you put “Don’t” or “Do not” in front of the verb.

EXAMPLE

Don’t cut it into pieces.

Don’t put it in hot water.

Do not keep it in a refrigerator.

In process paragraphs, complex sentences can be used as in other kinds of paragraphs. However, when you write complex sentences, which consist of a dependent clause and an independent clause, in a process paragraph, you can use the imperative verb only in the independent clause, but not in the dependent clauses.

EXAMPLE

After you wash your hair, rinse the hair with clean water.

Dependent clause

Independent clause

Rinse the hair with clean water after you wash your hair,

Independent clause

Dependent clause

Or

After you wash your hair, you rinse the hair with clean water.

Dependent clause

Independent clause

CHAPTER 7

REASON AND RESULT PARAGRAPHS



Writing reason and result paragraphs is explaining something by giving reasons or results. In this chapter, there are two parts; the first part will focus on writing reason paragraphs, and the second part will focus on writing result paragraphs.

REASON PARAGRAPHS

Writing a reason paragraph is explaining something by giving reasons and examples in order to support your ideas. There are several ways you can use to write reason paragraphs (adapted from Boardman, 1998; Kalchayanant, 2005).

- You can use the subordinating conjunctions “*because*” and “*since*”, followed by a clause.
- You can use the prepositions “*because of*” and “*due to*”, followed by a noun or noun phrase.
- You can use the coordinating conjunction “*for*” to connect two independent clauses. It is placed in front of the clause explaining why, and a comma is put before “*for*”.
- Also, you can use some expressions, for example, “*The first reason is that ...*” and “*It is because ...*”.

EXAMPLE

*I gained weight **because** I eat too much fast food.*

***Because** I eat too much fast food, I gained weight.*

*I gained weight **since** I eat too much fast food.*

***Since** I eat too much fast food, I gained weight.*

***Because of** eating too much fast food, I gained weight.*

***Due to** eating too much fast food, I gained weight.*

*I gained weight **because of** eating too much fast food.*

*I gained weight **due to** eating too much fast food.*

*I gained weight, **for** I eat too much fast food.*

*I gained weight. **The first reason is that** I eat too much fast food.*

*I gained weight. **It is because** I eat too much fast food.*

CHAPTER 8

COMPARE AND CONTRAST PARAGRAPHS



Writing compare and contrast paragraphs is explaining similarities and differences between two people, places, things, or experiences. In this chapter, the emphasis of the first part will be placed on writing compare paragraphs, and the second part will focus on writing contrast paragraphs.

COMPARE PARAGRAPHS

Writing a compare paragraph is explaining the similarities between two items. There are several ways you can use to write compare paragraphs (adapted from Oshima & Hogue, 1997).

- You can use signal words of comparison. These important signal words are as follows:
 - Sentence connectors, such as “*similarly*”, “*likewise*”, “*also*”, and “*too*”.
 - Coordinating conjunctions, such as “*and ... (too)*”.
 - Paired conjunctions, such as “*both ... and ...*”.
 - Some other signal words of comparison, such as “*as + adjective + as*”, “*the same + noun + as*”, “*be alike / be similar*”, “*be similar to / be like + noun*”, and “*both*”.

EXAMPLE

*John is a very kind person. **Similarly**, Tony is a very kind man.*

*John is a very kind person. **Likewise**, Tony is a very kind man.*

*John is a very kind person. Tony is **also** a very kind man.*

*John is a very kind person. Tony is a very kind man **also**.*

*John is a very kind person. Tony is a very kind man **too**.*

*John is a very kind person, **and** Tony is a very kind man **too**.*

***Both** John **and** Tony are very kind persons.*

*Paul is **as tall as** Mark.*

*Paul has **the same hair color as** Mark.*

*Paul and Mark **are alike** in many ways.*

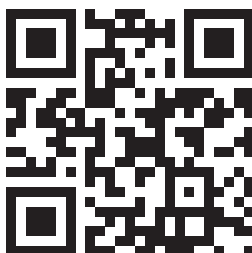




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